

Washington State Department of Transportation
Aviation Division
Monthly Update, September 2003

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1. **Aviation Division proves accountability**

Since John Sibold became the Aviation Division's director 1 ½ years ago, he has strived to make the Division accountable to its customers as he tackles airport preservation issues.

Registration

First on this to-do list was the fiscal year 2003 goal to collectively increase the pilot, aircraft and mechanic registrations compliance by 20 percent compared to fiscal year 2002.

With the passage of Senate Bill 6056 in May, the Aviation Division intensified outreach efforts to inform aviators of the change in law that increased annual registration fees from \$8 to \$15 and levied civil penalties against pilots, aircraft owners and mechanics who had not registered with the Department by the July 1 deadline.

The heightened outreach effort, a streamlined registration process, and a focus on improving services provided to registered customers led to increased registrations, which slightly exceeded the 20 percent improvement goal. More than 45 percent of the Aviation Division's customers used the web-based registration service, exceeding a 30 percent usage of online registration. A notable new service this year was the introduction of the Aviation News Service, an online information notification service to all registered customers.

Airport Aid Grant program

The increased registration fees along with a tax on aviation fuel culminated in the Division's ability to grant 29 general aviation airports in Washington more than \$1.26 million in State Airport Aid Grant money, which was distributed in August.

Revenues for the Airport Aid Grant program come from a tax on aviation fuel and certain aircraft and pilot registration fees. The local airport

sponsor must also contribute a minimum five percent or more match of the entire project cost to be considered for grant selection.

"We definitely met our goals for this year's program," John Sibold, Aviation Division Director, said. "We distributed grants evenly across the state, we focused our decisions on airport pavement and safety issues and we were able to utilize \$4 million in federal matching money along with the State funds."

The federal matching money comes from grants from the Federal Aviation Administration for general aviation airports that are part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS).

To date, the Airport grant program:

- ❑ Awarded 24 "new" grants worth a total of \$1,032,835;
- ❑ Received 23 signed grants back worth a total of \$1,020,335;
- ❑ Issued 18 Notices to Proceed worth a total of \$491,570;
- ❑ 12 "old" grants that the Division intends to complete this year for a total of \$234,960; and
- ❑ Waiting for 1 grant to be signed for the remaining total of \$12,500.

The Division will have \$859,730 under grant by mid-September (83 percent of the 03-04 grant program).

Another measure of the program's success, Sibold added, is in the number of airports that will be able to restore aging pavement. Sixty five percent of the distributed funds will be used for pavement maintenance projects, a prime goal for the Aviation Division. Under new Airport Aid Grant criteria, requesting airport sponsors had to define projects that were specific to: pavement, safety, maintenance, security and planning.

Land Use planning: a preservation tool, not a goal

WSDOT encourages airports to work closely with city and county jurisdictions to coordinate adjacent land use plans and implementation regulations, to protect airports as essential public facilities and address airport operational needs and growth management issues. Cities and counties are amending their comprehensive plans in the next few years to comply with changes to the Growth Management Act. RCW 36.70.547, which requires all jurisdictions in Washington State that host a public use airport to protect the airport from incompatible development.

While many of the public use airports in Washington are protected by their jurisdiction through adopted compatible land use plans and regulations, several still face the challenge of protecting the facilities for future capacity needs and reaching the highest economic status possible for the location.

Many land use laws affect Washington airports

The 1996 revision to the Growth Management Act is not the only law airport sponsors need to acquaint themselves with. In Washington State, the Municipal Airports Act, Chapter 14.08 RCW authorizes municipalities to sponsor airports Airport Zoning, Chapter 14.12 RCW, enables local jurisdictions land use authority for on airport uses. Both laws have governed since the mid-1940s.

Challenges ahead

WSDOT looks forward to working with airport sponsors, jurisdictions, the FAA and other affected state agencies in attempting to reign in the difficult question – how to enable the greatest economic ability of an airport consistent with state land use law. Even the Washington State Land Use Study Commission found the task difficult in relation to essential public facilities of statewide significance.

The solutions lie with cooperative efforts and partnerships. The solutions do not result from more government regulation. It will require negotiations and compromise – and sponsors may have to find trade-offs that enable the airport to do what it hopes to accomplish while keeping in balance with compatible uses.

A targeted business plan

With the goal of producing a targeted business plan, the Aviation Division has formed three study groups to formulate policy to assist the Division in its mission to provide the aviation community readily identifiable performance measurements on the programs WSDOT administers.

The three study groups, which are now meeting, include community, city, state and federal representatives who are experts in aviation system planning, aviation education and air search and rescue resources.

“The expectation of government agencies is to produce meaningful deliverables. I define our agency as really the caretaker of the entire aviation system in Washington State,” John Sibold said. “That is a big responsibility. But really, we all are caretakers and we need to take that responsibility seriously so that we leave a transportation system to the

new generation that was well planned and efficient in meeting the needs of an ever changing industry,” he added.

2. Information campaign to highlight results of Airport Aid Grant money allocations

The 29 airports in Washington State, which received more than \$1.26 million in State Airport Aid Grant money this year will soon have new signs showing how the money is being spent. The program, which is similar to the Washington State Department of Transportation’s “It’s You’re Nickel” project for highway maintenance, is one more step the Aviation Division is taking in its mission to be accountable to its customers.

In the past year, The Aviation Division has worked hard to find solutions to the many airports in the state utilizing substandard runway pavement.

Grant assurance requirements require the airport sponsor to:

- ❑ Keep the airport open to the public and operating as an airport for the entire useful life of the project developed under the grant;
- ❑ Not enter into any exclusive operating or use agreements with any person, company, or corporation;
- ❑ Follow economic non-discrimination and civil rights laws and ensure that airport contractors and subcontractors follow these laws;
- ❑ Ensure prevailing wage rates are paid to project workers, maintain detailed project records and make these records available for review, and follow public contracting law for consulting, management, engineering and public works contracts.

“I believe we’ve made a great leap forward in this effort by providing the needed support to generate increased security, safety in pavement improvements and better overall maintenance of the airports funded in this grant cycle, Director Sibold said.”

For a list of the airports receiving funds, go to <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/News/PavementRepairs.htm> on the Internet.

3. Welcome signs greet aviators at 16 State owned airports

Jim Scott, WSDOT Aviation Airport Maintenance Supervisor, is posting 85 new signs at the 16 state-owned airports. At each airport, welcome signs will be posted explaining visitor information. Attached to the welcoming sign will be a guest book where pilots can sign-in and leave messages.

Many volunteer groups helped Scott post the signs including the Starbucks Coffee Company Flying Club, which adopted Little Goose State Airport that is located near Starbuck, Wash. Besides putting up new signs, volunteers replaced the wind sock and did other repair work. The group plans to install a Starbucks box containing samples of the company's signature coffee beans. For more information about the WSDOT Aviation Division "Adopt-A-State-Airport" program, contact Scott at scottj@wsdot.wa.gov.

4. Mountain Flying Clinic 2003 is a success

The annual Mountain Flying Clinic is a memory, but for the 100 people who attended the seminars held on Saturday and Sunday, September 14 and 15, what they learned might someday save their lives, according to Tom Peterson, WSDOT Air Search and Rescue Coordinator, who oversaw the event held at Pangborn Airport.

According to him, about 75 of the people who participated in the seminars were able to get up in the air and actually test their skills flying through the Cascade Mountain Range near Wenatchee.

The Mountain Flying Clinic first began in the 1980s as part of WSDOT Aviation Division's goal to provide educational opportunities to help pilots fly safely in Washington's sometimes rugged, mountainous terrain.

WSDOT Aviation would like to especially thank Wings of Wenatchee, the Washington Air Search and Rescue volunteers, and the Federal Aviation Administration, Spokane FSDO for helping organize and making the event a success.

The Washington Pilots Association, Wenatchee Chapter also played an important role keeping everyone fed with a hot dog lunch and a spaghetti dinner.

Attendees overwhelmingly gave the Clinic a thumbs up as evidenced in their comments on seminar critique sheets. Many, however, requested that the clinic be held twice a year – once on the East side of the Mountains and once on the West side, a request WSDOT is looking into.

Another important group, The Airspace Coordination Team of the U.S. Forest Service, responsible for TFR information at the event, gave Peterson and Stan Allison, WSDOT Aviation Airport Operations Manager, a big thank you for "making the airspace safer."

5. Air Search and Rescue orientation classes offered

WSDOT Aviation is offering two courses to pilots interested in becoming certified air search and rescue volunteers.

The Air Search and Rescue Orientation Course 101 is scheduled for Puyallup from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 27 and 28 at Thun Field in the Civil Air Patrol Building.

In Yakima, the Air Search and Rescue Orientation Course 101 will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 8 and 9 at the McAllister Air Museum at the Yakima Air Terminal.

To register, contact Tom Peterson, WSDOT Aviation Air Search and Rescue Coordinator, (360) 651-6308 or at peterth@wsdot.wa.gov.

6. Certified Flight Instructor course planned in November

Flight instructors wishing to enroll in the November WSDOT Aviation Division certified flight instructor renewal course could now do so online at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/CFI_Renewal_November.htm

The two-day class will be held: Saturday, and Sunday, November 8 & 9, in the Jackson Center at Everett Community College, 2000 Tower Street in Everett. Out-of-town attendees are asked to make their own hotel/motel reservations at local inns in the surrounding area.

The course includes 16 hours of instruction and is open to the first 65 who pre-register only. All registrants must be Washington State Registered Pilots. For other information, contact Marilee Jensen, WSDOT Aviation Division, (360) 651-6302.

7. Republic Fly-In evokes memories for one visitor to August event

Stan Allison, WSDOT Airport Operations Manager, was able to make a dream come true for one visitor to the Wings Over Republic event held in August.

Seventy-six-year-old Mary Strong of Republic, was at the event when Allison flew in aboard the WSDOT Cessna 182 RG Skylane. For Strong, Cessna aircraft of any vintage hold a strong place in her heart and she immediately introduced herself to Allison and asked to sit in the cockpit.

Allison was more than happy to invite her in for a “ground eye view” of the cockpit. Strong was delighted.

It turns out that the first time she took a flight, it wasn’t in a commercial plane, but in a Cessna some 53 years ago. “I was pregnant with my fourth child at the time,” she told Allison and Robin Warner, WSDOT Aviation Outreach Coordinator, who also attended the event. The ride lasted only five minutes but the excitement has stayed with her for years.

But that wasn’t Strong’s first encounter with general aviation. As a teen, living in Florida, she volunteered as a “Plane Spotter” during World War II. In that capacity, she’d sit on the fence of the local airport scouting for suspicious-looking planes and relay the information to the airport’s tower. She still has the identification card provided to her by the U.S. government to prove it.

Today, Mary likes to flex her arm to show her muscle when she introduces herself, saying “Strong.” And the name is definitely appropriate. Besides caring for her ailing husband who recently passed away, she continues to run her own home, garden and until recently broke and trained horses for a living, a career that makes flying by plane seem quite tame.

8. Justin Smith outlines goals for Republic Airport

Justin Smith, newly appointed Ferry County Airport manager, wants to continue the work he and the late Rudy Ohlund began four years ago at the Republic Airport.

In an interview with WSDOT Aviation at the Wings Over Republic event in August, he described plans to upgrade the facility to attract more pilots to the area who might spend money in the community.

Times have not been too good to the areas around the airport and in the adjacent town of Republic where unemployment rates are high and traditional employment in logging and mining are slowly disappearing.

The area’s biggest business, according to Smith, is in residential construction of new homes for an increasing number of senior citizens and well-heeled business people who are building weekend retreats near the pristine Curlew Lake, located within national forest land.”

And while the “sun” birds and weekend vacationers do add money to the Ferry County economy, it isn’t enough.

When he and Ohlund first began the Wings Over Republic event, they envisioned someday attracting an industrial park by the airport; a dream that has yet to happen.

Other wishes that ultimately would attract more aviators to the area and perhaps an industrial park, is to provide new hangars at the airport and an aircraft fueling station.

Thanks to a recent grant of \$30,000 from the WSDOT Aviation Airport Aid Grant Program to install water lines for fire suppression, that wish list is a little smaller.

Smith has been a Ferry County resident for 27 years and even with a successful construction company to run, he vows to keep his and Rudy's dream alive at the Ferry County Airport.

Editor's Note: *More than 60 planes and many visitors attended the Wings of Republic Fly-In in August. Organizers had planned for an even larger group but smoke from Washington State and British Columbia fires kept many flyers away from the event. A special service was conducted for Ohlund who perished May 30 while conducting an Air Search and Rescue mission. Besides being eulogized by his Aviation friends and family, the Ferry County Sheriff's Department dedicated an engraved marble table and benches for use at the airport in honor of Ohlund and Ferry County Under Sheriff Mathew Lane, 41, a passenger in the downed plane.*

9. Airport security another priority of Aviation Division

As reported in the July/August Monthly Update, regional meetings are being scheduled by Reid Middleton Inc. as part of a contract with the Aviation Division to help airport sponsors in the preparation of airport facility security plans. The three meetings will be held the first part of October in Vancouver, Moses Lake, and at the Skagit Regional Airport in Burlington.

While these preparations are under way, representatives of the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), who have been assigned responsibility for general aviation security, have expressed interest in participating in the regional aviation security meetings.

TSA is very impressed by the Division's efforts to assist airport sponsors in developing security plans.

10. Air Search and Rescue on the job 24/7

The job of the Air Search and Rescue Coordinator at the WSDOT Aviation Division doesn't end at 5 p.m. weekdays, or even on weekends. It is a 24-hour job that often means phone calls in the middle of the night to Tom Peterson, Aviation Division SAR coordinator who rotates his night watch with Jim Scott, Aviation Division Airport. In the last month, ending August 31, the following aircraft incidents were reported to WSDOT Aviation – many of them reported when everyone else is fast asleep.

Overdue aircraft: 2 – In both cases the airplanes were found to have been listed as overdue because the pilots forgot to close their flight plans.

Accidents: 12 – Four pilots killed; four injured.

ELTs: 30 – 10 resulting in missions to locate the source.

Hoax: 1 – Radar controllers at McChord Air Force Base heard a “Mayday” being announced over the emergency frequency. They alerted the WSDOT Air Search and Rescue system to investigate. It was determined to be a false alarm and WSDOT notified the Federal Communications Commission to investigate.

Sightings: 2 – After a lot of media coverage about aircraft accidents, people were watching the sky more closely and two reports were made to 911 centers concerning possible forced landings. Both were investigated and determined to be false.

11. State airport put to good use in fighting Lake Wenatchee fire

A large firebase has been set up at the Lake Wenatchee Airport to fight the Maple fire, which is burning 20 miles northwest of Leavenworth. It consumed more than 1,600 acres. Scott visited the airport Sunday, Sept. 7, for a fire briefing with the United States Forest Service Aviation Unit Manager. He toured the facilities and discussed staging operations that will allow the airport to stay open for non-firefighting pilots while the firebase is in operation. By Sept 10, the firebase was fully staffed with six helicopters, mobile command units, kitchens and showers to support the more than 300 people there involved in the fire fighting operations.

12. Fire season keeps Methow Airport busy as staging area for fire fighters

New WSDOT signs were installed at the Methow State Airport in the midst of yet another fire-fighting operation tackling the Needle Fire, which is burning northwest of Winthrop.

The United States Forest Service has been using the airport for a helicopter base since the fire began six weeks ago. The fire has consumed more than 21,000 acres and has forced evacuations in and around Mazama. Methow Airport is also the site of the North Cascades Smoke Jumper base.

13. Okanogan Legion Airport Improvement Association volunteers seal cracks in runway and pull weeds

Beginning at 6:30 a.m. on a recent warm and sunny Tuesday morning, several volunteers with the Okanogan Legion Airport Improvement Association began their day pouring more than 600 pounds of molten tar into cracks on the Okanogan Legion Airport runway.

The crew used a tar pot provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to melt two dozen 25-pound blocks of tar. The special crack sealing tar was purchased last year as part of a \$5,000 grant the City of Okanogan received to maintain the airplane parking area and the runway pavement.

Airport Manager Bix Rosenkranz, noted that “because we’ve done such a good job sealing cracks over the past four years the runway is in really great shape. Annual pavement maintenance saves the City thousands of dollars by eliminating the need to periodically replace the asphalt runway; regular maintenance extends the pavement life indefinitely.” Sealing the cracks prevents water from seeping beneath the pavement and thwarts frost from creating potholes and loose gravel that would damage landing airplanes.

The runway was reconstructed in 1993 with a \$70,000 grant from WSDOT. Funds for the Aviation Division grants are generated from taxes on general aviation fuel.

While cracks were being sealed, another crew of volunteers pulled weeds. All of the large tumbleweeds and thistle within eight to 10 feet of the pavement edge were pulled along both sides of the 2,500-foot runway.

According to John Townsley secretary of the Okanogan Legion Airport Improvement Association, the airport is home primarily to single engine general aviation aircraft. “Several times a month aircraft visit Okanogan

from out of state. Many times they are flown by an owner-pilot, but often they are chartered flights bringing people to the county on business,” he added.

The volunteer crew included Rosenkranz, Townsley and Okanogan residents Roy Skelton, Tia Wooley, Larry Wooley, Chris Wooley, Tohny Wooley, Jonathan Wooley and Kory Lester.

14. Tumwater adopts comprehensive plan in favor of Olympia Airport

On Sept. 9, the Tumwater City Council adopted comprehensive plan policies to discourage incompatible development adjacent to the Olympia Airport. The policies recognize the airport as an essential public facility, encourage open space in key areas and rely on best available science practices for development regulations. The City anticipates adoption of development regulations in 2004

15. Calendar

16. WSDOT Aviation Training

Sept 27-28 – ASARCO 101 orientation, Thun Field in the Civil Air Patrol Building To register, call Tom Peterson, WSDOT Aviation Division, (360) 651-6308.

Nov. 8-9 – Certified Flight Instructor Renewal, Everett. To register, call Marilee Jensen, WSDOT Aviation Division, (360) 651-6302.

Nov. 8-9 – ASAROC 101 orientation, McAllister Air Museum at the Yakima Airport. To register, call Tom Peterson, WSDOT Aviation Division, (360) 651-6308.

All training is by pre-registration. To sign up, call (360) 651-6300 or in-state call 1-800-552-0666. Pilots must be registered with the state in order to participate.

17. Training in the Community

Sept. 24 – Wings program, 7 p.m., Clover Park College, Thun Field. For information, call Scott Gardiner, (425) 227-2880.

Sept. 25 – Wings program, 7 p.m. Museum of Flight. For information, call Scott Gardiner, (425) 227-2880.

Oct. 14 – Preparing for Cold Weather Ops, 9 a.m. to noon, FAA Wings Program, Mission Aviation Training Academy, Arlington Municipal Airport. Free. For information, call (425) 231-5855.

Oct. 22 – Wings program, 7 p.m., Snohomish PUD Auditorium, Lynnwood. For information, call Scott Gardiner, (425) 277-2880.

Nov. 1 – Airspace in Review, 9 a.m. to noon, FAA Wings Program, Mission Aviation Training Academy, Arlington Municipal Airport. Free. For information, call (425) 231-5855.

Dec. 6 – Winter Engine Care, 9 a.m. to noon, FAA Wings Program, Mission Aviation Training Academy, Arlington Municipal Airport. Free. For information, call (425) 231-5855.

18. Community Events

Oct. 2 – Astronomy Day at the Museum of Flight, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., Museum of Flight. Free with Museum admission.

19. Special Aviation Events

Sept. 27 & 28 – Classic Wings over Olympia, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Olympia Region Airport. For information, call Olympia Flight Museum, (360) 705-3925 or visit www.olympiaflightmuseum.com on the Internet.

Oct. 4 – Hangar 15 monthly Weenie Burn and Pilot debrief, Bellingham Intl. Airport, Bellingham, Wash. For information, call (360) 671-2250.

Oct. 4 and 5 – Wings and Wheels Festival, Pangborn Airport, East Wenatchee, Wash. For information, call (509) 884-2494.

Nov. 1 – Hangar 15 Monthly Weenie Burn and Pilot debrief, Bellingham Intl. Airport, Bellingham, Wash.

Nov. 8 – Veterans Hangar Dance, Pearson Air Museum, Vancouver, Wash. For information, visit www.pearsonairmuseum.org.

Dec. 7 – Pearl Harbor Ceremony, Pearson Air Museum, Vancouver. For information, call (360) 694-7026 or visit www.pearsonairmuseum.org on the Internet.

Dec. 13 – Santa Welcome and Helicopter Show, Olympic Flight Museum. For information, call (360) 705-3925 or visit www.olympicflightmuseum.com on the Internet.

20. Regularly scheduled meetings and events

Harvey Field, Washington Pilots Association – Meets the third Saturday of each month at the Buzz Inn at Harvey Field. Breakfast, 9 a.m. Meeting 10 a.m. For information, call (360) 568-9616.

North Sound, WPA – Meets the second Thursday of the month except June, July and August at 7 p.m. on the second floor of the BLI terminal. For information, call (360) 671-4359.

Okanogan WPA – Meets the third Thursday of the month, alternating between Omak and Tonasket. For information, call (509) 997-8141.

Southwest Vancouver WPA – Meets the last Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. Pearson Air Museum. For information, call (360) 573-6020.

Paine Field WPA – Meets the first Friday of the month, 7 p.m., potluck dinner; 8 p.m. program, Sno Isle Vocational Skill Center, 9001 Airport Road, Everett.

Yakima Valley WPA – Meets the last Friday of the month, 6:30 p.m. For information, call (509) 966-4868.

To have your organization's upcoming events published here, contact Robin Warner at avioutc@wsdot.wa.gov.